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St. Louis City Board Bill 194

A smoking ordinance has impact even before it becomes law

by Jim McDonald

Several months ago Saint Louis tobacco use prevention activists got a big boost when city Alderman Freeman Bosley, Sr., decided to sponsor and propose City Board Bill 194. The bill proposed banning smoking in all city-owned and -leased property. According to Pat Lindsey, who is the Missouri Tobacco Use Prevention Program's Saint Louis Area Regional Specialist, that would have banned smoking, to put it simply, "in a lot of places" throughout the city of Saint Louis.

Almost immediately the future of Bill 194 encountered one big snag—Lambert International Airport. Lambert is city property, which effectively puts it under the umbrella of City Bill 194, and airport officials balked. They maintained their current policy of confining smoking to designated lounges was effectively protecting the public health. Tobacco use prevention advocates felt strongly that Lambert should be included in the proposed city ban, however, so they asked the city to conduct air-quality tests. Both sides await the final analysis of those tests, but regard-

less of the outcome, prevention advocates say even though it has yet to pass, or is even in its final form, City Board Bill 194 already is having a positive effect.

Lambert International Airport became a point of contention almost as soon as City Bill 194 was proposed. According

Lambert International was a point of contention almost from the beginning.

to Viviane McKay, MPH, Community Health Coordinator with the Saint Louis County Health Department, the objection had a rational genesis. McKay said airport officials were concerned about the bottleneck that might be created if people had to re-enter through sometimes long security check lines. In the ensuing debate, no less than three air quality tests were performed to determine how well the smoking lounge system was protecting the health

of the general public.

The city contracted with the University of California (UC) at Berkley to analyze the air quality at Lambert Field; the airport hired a local company to test the air quality; and, an independent organization conducted their own tests duplicating the methods and equipment used by UC Berkley technicians.

Airport management insists that tests conducted by their local contractor, Global Environmental Labs, demonstrated that the smoking lounges "worked as intended." According to a representative of the organization that underwrote the independent test, they found "significant results," but declined to share their results by press time. And as of this writing, the samples have been sent to UC Berkley and tested, but the analysis is yet to be completed.

With the UC Berkley analysis still pending, members of the Tobacco Free Missouri Coalition were asked to meet with the President of the Saint Louis City Board of Alderman, Jim Shrewsbury, about the

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Southwest Missouri Laundry Cleans Up

Luann Becker says she is changing her business cards for the Laundromat she has owned and operated in Joplin, Missouri, for the past 14 years. Her new cards will prominently proclaim, "The 15th Street Laundry now is totally smoke free." Becker believes her's may be the first area Laundromat to prohibit smoking on the premises. Her initial worries of lost business have faded like a pair of blue jeans washed in pure bleach. An outpouring of gratitude from

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The '03 Spring Workshop

Empowering Missouri Communities to Clear the Air of Secondhand Smoke

It was standing-room-only as the Missouri Tobacco Use Prevention Program welcomed tobacco control advocates from around the state to its spring workshop, "Empowering Missouri Communities to Clear the Air of Secondhand Smoke." Attendance for the March 18 and 19 workshop held in Jefferson City averaged more than 65 for both days.

The Program brought in two nationally recognized authorities as instructors for the workshop, Glenn E. Schneider and Perry Stevens. They proved to be a bargain. Glenn's formal education is in microbiology with an MPH in community health services administration. He has worked in public health and in community organizing for most of his professional career. Currently he is deputy director of the Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative Education Fund based in Baltimore, MD. Perry Stevens earned a BA in journalism and followed that with an MPA. Perry works as a communications consultant in public health and media relations. As a former press officer and health communicator with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Perry has the formal letters, but it is part of his extensive experience

working in the media that makes Perry particularly effective in teaching communication to a Show-me audience—he worked a fair amount of time as a radio talk-show host.

Appropriately, Glenn opened the workshop with a Power Point presentation on the science of secondhand smoke (SS). Glenn ably converted technical jargon into plain, every-

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Thus, the main points to remember are simple:

- 1) SS is bad;***
- 2) there is no safe level of exposure to SS; and,***
- 3) a total ban of smoking inside public places is the only viable option.***

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day language. Thus, the main points to remember are simple: 1) SS is bad; 2) there is no safe level of exposure to SS; and, 3) a total ban of smoking inside public places is the only viable option to protect the health of all. Glenn encouraged all participants to maintain a firm grasp of the science of SS, because science is a powerful ally for tobacco prevention campaigns.

Most prevention advocates are aware that SS contains more than 4,000 chemical compounds, more than 50 of which are known carcinogens. As Glenn pointed out, however,

the science has come further. With improved methods of tracking biomarkers, these carcinogenic compounds now are being found in tissue samples of people who report very low levels of exposure to SS. Evidence now strongly suggests that more than seven hours is required to clear a room's atmosphere of toxic chemicals following the exposure from just one

cigarette. This evidence is buoyed by the recent abandonment of the tobacco industry's law suit against the EPA for classifying SS as a class A carcinogen—Glenn encouraged all to remember, and loudly invoke, this landmark classification and the tobacco industry's accep-

tance of it as fact. In subsequent sessions, the audience separated into regional groups to discuss and craft short, pithy, answers to tobacco industry arguments. These are called sound bytes. Basically they are the message that you would retain from reading a billboard at 70 miles per hour. Most attendees enjoyed this exercise and a chance to add to the workshop dialog.

There also was a chance to do some spin doctoring, otherwise called framing. Framing involves casting the debate in terms of your choosing—terms that

keep the focus where you want it to be. For tobacco use prevention advocates, the goal is to keep the focus on science rather than innuendo, on the tobacco industry rather than individual smokers, on the public good rather than individual choice.

Much attention was paid to the nuts and bolts of developing strong coalitions. One of the first steps, according to Glenn, is to decide what self-interests are being, or can be, served and exploit them. This works to keep a coalition vibrant as well as to entice seemingly disparate civic groups, or segments, of society to support the means to achieving a common goal. Association with your coalition should provide effective opportunities for member organizations to achieve better visibility, increase access to resources, and enhance capacity to achieve other goals. To help manage the goals and direction for a coalition Glenn provided the group with a simple working chart to help identify goals, organizational considerations, allies and opponents, targets (always people), and tactics.

As a workshop bonus, the Program's Northwest District Community Policy Specialist, Jamie Baker, presented a case study of the Nodaway County Coalition's

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MOTUP Welcomes New Staff

Joyce Lara and Jamie Baker have joined the Missouri Tobacco Use Prevention Program (MOTUP) staff as Community Policy Specialists. These two bring a wealth of experience to their jobs. Both have worked for several years as program regional representatives for MOTUP.

"Having these two health professionals on board will assure that the tobacco prevention movement will not have to start anew in these regions, but will instead continue seamlessly," said Janet Wilson, Chief of the Bureau of Health Promotion and MOTUP Director. "We feel very

fortunate to secure experience and ability of their caliber."

Jamie Baker earned her BA in Psychology with a related field in management from the University of Missouri-Columbia. She has worked in tobacco use prevention since 1996 beginning as the North-west Missouri consultant with the American Stop Smoking Intervention Study (ASSIST). Jamie hails from Savannah, Missouri and lived in Columbia for ten years after graduating from college.

"Although moving back home was not part of my grand plan at 18, I'm thankful that I did,"

Jamie said. "I really enjoy working with the people, communities, and schools in North-west Missouri."

Jamie represents the program for the Northwest District. She can be reached by telephone at (816) 632-7610, and her e-mail address is Bakerj@dhss.state.mo.us

Joyce Lara earned her BS degree from the University of Nebraska-Kearney. She has worked in prevention for about 13 years, the last four in tobacco use prevention.

Joyce is one of the founders of a program of tobacco use prevention among youth called Smokebusters. She and her colleagues are in the

process of marketing the program, which is a complete how-to for recruiting, organizing, and maintaining local youth as advocates for tobacco use prevention.

"I am very active with my church's youth programs, Kirksville's soccer program, and high school band."

Joyce represents the Northeast District. Her telephone number is (660) 385-3125, and her e-mail address is Laraj@dhss.state.mo.us

The MOTUP Community Policy Specialists are available for technical assistance to members of the communities in the regions they represent.###

Workshop

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campaign to get a city ordinance passed that would prohibit smoking in all restaurants in the county seat, Maryville. Jamie's message was clear: adequately assess your situation, shore up your support, and then go forward one step at a time. For the folks of the Nodaway County Coalition, many small victories over several years added up to a town full of people who understand the issue of secondhand smoke. As their campaign continues, coalition members hope

to build on that cognizance of this public health threat.

The final guest lecture was from media specialist Perry Stevens, from Memphis, TN. Perry offered many practical tips on how the media do their job and how community activists can use that information to garner the optimal amount of attention for their cause. Perry used an extensive background, working for newspapers and radio stations, to convey useful tips on what is considered news

and how to frame an issue or event for the best effect.

For the last part of Perry's segment, he staged a live radio talk show. Perry enlisted members of the audience to be his guests appearing on opposite sides of the issue of total bans on smoking in public places. Other members of the audience acted as callers from both sides of the issue.###

Coming next issue . . .

"Springfield Takes a Breather"

Springfield is the first out of the gate in the Missouri smoking ordinance derby.

Laundry

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her customers has supplanted those worries.

"Putting smoke free on my business cards was a customer's suggestion," Becker said. "She stopped me one day to say thanks for making the business smoke free and asked for some business cards to give to her co-workers."

Becker said going totally smoke free had occurred to her many times before, but she worried about the effect it would have on her business because it

seemed that so many of her customers smoked. But since going totally smoke free the first of March, she says business is as good or better and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

One woman told Becker that because of the smoke, she used to feel compelled to wait in her car while her clothes were washing and drying. Another customer thanked her because she had an asthmatic child and that had prevented her from using Becker's Laundromat, but then she noticed the No Smoking sign when she

came in to get quarters to use in her apartment complex machines. "You will get my business from now on," the woman told Becker.

It was another customer's thank-you that reminded Becker of a business expense she might no longer have to bear since going smoke free. "One of my drop-off customers told me that she used to try to hold her breath when she came in," Becker said. The 15th Street Laundry offers full-service laundry where busy people "drop off" their dirty clothes and pick them up fully laundered. "That reminded me," Becker

said, "that I always had at least one re-do a month when people complained that their freshly laundered clothes didn't exactly smell freshly laundered" she said. "So far, the new smoke-free policy has eliminated re-dos."

Along with the fresh air, the 15th Street Laundry also has a fresh coat of paint. Becker had it done as soon as the new policy went into effect. She says it's nice when people comment that the place smells clean. A laundry that smells clean and fresh—now there's a progressive concept. ###

Smokes

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possibility of moving Bill 194 past the debate. Both sides agreed such important legislation shouldn't languish.

They decided to make the airport lounges a separate bill, and to go forward with a ban on smoking in all city-owned and -leased property.

"I feel pretty good about today's meeting," Pat Lindsay said of the compromise, "because I think it will be a lot easier to pass an ordinance without the airport stumbling block. It might also be easier to pass the airport ordinance after we have a victory under our belts."

"It (Bill 194) still is a very big step in the right direction," said Viviane McKay, "and more than what we had before."

Pat Lindsey was even

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"Oh my gosh, we will keep fighting. Definitely."

—Pat Lindsay

more sanguine on the effect that City Bill 194 will have on tobacco use prevention in St. Louis. "Oh my gosh," Lindsey said, "we will keep fighting. Definitely."

McKay and Lindsey, who both are members

of Tobacco-Free Missouri, say that City Bill 194 has definitely been good for their issue. They both agree that business has definitely picked up since the bill's introduction. "Every time I conduct a (Smoking Cessation Facilitators) training," said Lindsey, "I get requests for more."

She said she has trained 60 facilitators already this year and is on schedule to have 70 by May. That is more than double the number (33) she trained during all of last year!

"City employees have accepted that a change is coming," Lindsey said. "These are motivated people," she said, "not just people coming to

get out of a day of work."

Viviane McKay echoes Lindsey's appraisal of the impact of City Bill 194 thus far. She says that in the last 4-6 months the city has had 600 requests for smoke-free restaurant guides—the best response in four years.

"We've made an impact," McKay said, "our campaign is empowering people to say, 'No, it's not okay to smoke around me.'""###